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ABSTRACT

The Student Leadership Development Program at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville was first offered to students in January 1988. It consists of three parts: leadership modules, active citizenship, and university and community service. The modules are interactive learning sessions, the citizenship component is project-oriented, and the service portion focuses on volunteer work on or off campus. Students who wish to complete the program select and complete two of the three components. They receive a transcript that details their experiences. In an additional feature of the program, students may have a mentor from the university or community who shares their interests. The program was designed to provide students with opportunities to: (1) gain knowledge about leadership, effective leaders, and their qualities; (2) participate in the democratic process through citizenship experiences; and (3) serve the university and community. The program was developed through an advisory committee to the dean of students. Day-to-day operations are managed by a staff of three. Funding has been provided by the institution. A multifaceted approach to program has been developed to gain feedback from about 480 students served by the program. (Author/MSE)

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STUDENT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville

Operational January 1988 - Present

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

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AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory is a two-year project seeking to establish and test a model system for collecting and disseminating information on model programs at AASCU-member institutions--375 of the public four-year colleges and universities in the United States.

The four objectives of the project are:

- To increase the information on model programs available to all institutions through the ERIC system
- To encourage the use of the ERIC system by AASCU institutions
- To improve AASCU's ability to know about, and share information on, activities at member institutions, and
- To test a model for collaboration with ERIC that other national organizations might adopt.

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project is funded with a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, in collaboration with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education at The George Washington University.

ABSTRACT

This narrative report details the development of an innovative program for both undergraduate and graduate students that focuses on leadership. The Student Leadership Development Program at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville was first offered to students in January 1988. The program consists of three component parts - the Leadership Modules, Active Citizenship, and University and Community Service. The Modules are interactive learning sessions; Citizenship is project-oriented; and, Service focuses on volunteer work on or off campus. Students who wish to complete the program select and complete two of these three components. They receive a transcript that details their experiences. As an additional feature of the program, students may interact with a mentor from the University or community who shares their interests.

This program was designed to provide students with opportunities to:

a. gain knowledge about leadership, effective leaders and their qualities;

b. participate in the democratic process through citizenship experiences; and,

c. serve the University and community.

The program was developed through an advisory committee to the Dean of Students. Day-to-day operations are managed by a staff of three - the program coordinator, a graduate assistant and a secretary. To date, funding has been provided by the institution. A multifaceted approach to program evaluation has been developed to gain feedback from approximately 480 students who have been served by the program since its inception.

INTRODUCTION

The Student Leadership Development Program at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville was designed to help students learn more about themselves and gain skills in the areas of leadership, citizenship, and service. Participation in the program is purely voluntary and is in no way tied to monetary compensation or academic credit. Program participants select from two of three components and work in areas of their own interests, according to their own schedules.

This document describes the impetus for this innovative educational experience, as well as its goals, component parts and means of evaluation.

BACKGROUND

In 1985 the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching called for a fundamental re-examination of higher education. The Foundation urged that higher education restore its original purpose of preparing graduates for a life of involved and committed citizenship. Since the Carnegie Foundations's call for re-examination, several states, including Illinois, have called for institutions of higher education to prepare students to understand what it means to be a citizen and to move beyond their own self-interests to become responsible and effective leaders.

Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville also recognized the fundamental need for students to learn about leadership from

real leaders and build skills through volunteering for practical experiences. Further, the University recognized the value of exposing students to positive role models - both in and out of their areas of career interest.

Since the program's inception related community service legislation has been introduced in Congress and the Illinois General Assembly. The 101st Congress has placed national community service legislation high on its agenda. The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, chaired by Senator Edward M. Kennedy, approved a compromise national service bill that would make community service an option not only for college students, but for almost anyone. The $300 million public service package includes loan forgiveness for those who participated in some type of community service; financial incentives for colleges and universities to develop programs that incorporate public service into their academic curricula; and a Youth Service Corps that could offer higher education aid of up to $5,200 for every year of volunteer service. Part-time volunteers could receive comparable benefits.

Illinois Governor James Thompson, on September 9, 1989, signed legislation creating the Student Volunteer Corps that is to be administered by the Illinois Board of Higher Education. The purpose of this program is to provide every college and university student with an ongoing opportunity to participate in a community service activity. Students are expected to provide an average of 30 hours of community service each academic year.

The passage of this legislation illustrates the continuing need for programs that embrace service as an integral part of leadership.

DESCRIPTION

In 1987 Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville responded to the challenges presented by Congress and the Carnegie Foundation when its President established the Student Leadership Development Program Committee. This committee developed an organizational structure and a program to provide students with opportunities to:

a. gain knowledge about leadership, effective leaders and their qualities;

b. participate in active citizenship projects; and,

c. serve the University and the community.

The Student Leadership Development Program began with an inaugural luncheon in November 1987. The leadership modules component began in January 1988, along with the citizenship and service components. In June 1988, a Program Coordinator was employed to coordinate the various components, promote the program, and manage the program on a daily basis. Since the program's inception, the number of students served has grown from approximately 200 in Spring 1988, to over 480 in Fall 1989. The number of students matched with mentors has increased from 17 to more than 80 in the same time period. The staff currently consists of the coordinator, a graduate assistant and a secretary. The program budget is $44,112.00.

The leadership program has received both institutional and community support. More than 50 members of the University community have presented training modules. These presenters include functional area heads, faculty, and members of the professional staff. More than 40 community leaders have also volunteered their time to support the module series. These leaders include government officials, bank executives, media personalities, corporate officers, members of the SIU Board of Trustees and the SIUE Foundation Board.

More than 90 professionals from SIUE and surrounding communities have volunteered to serve as mentors for students in the program. Of that number, more than 50 are faculty or staff from Academic Affairs. The remaining number (approximately 20) are from varying professions, including law, human resources, engineering, and advertising. They represent companies such as McDonnell Douglas, Anheuser-Busch, Wetterau, and Southwestern Bell.

Through the leadership program, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville has taken positive action to prepare graduates for a life of committed citizenship and leadership. The leadership program provides students at SIUE with creative opportunities to develop their civic awareness and leadership capabilities. Through the program, students are encouraged to build skills that will enhance their personal and career goals and make positive contributions to the University and the community. All enrolled SIUE students may participate,

regardless of academic major or class standing. In order to complete the program students select two of the following three components:

University and Community Service - The service component focuses on leadership experience available through non-paid service to the University or the community. Students may volunteer for student organizations, campus advisory boards and committees, academic clubs, and a variety of University events. Off-campus experiences are available at service sites in Metro East and St. Louis.

Active Citizenship - The citizenship component offers students the opportunity to enhance their understanding of law, democracy, the judicial system or public policy development. Students selecting this component are required to complete a civic awareness experience that includes an individually designed observation, proposal and project.

Leadership Modules - The leadership program offers 36 interactive modules that cover various aspects of leadership, citizenship, and service. Each module is presented by a faculty, staff, alumni, community member, or student who is knowledgeable on the topic. The modules provide opportunities for self-assessment, skill building, and group interaction.

Students may choose to interact with a faculty, staff, or community mentor who serves as an informal adviser and guide. Students are matched with mentors based on mutual interest, either career or personal.

Students who successfully complete the leadership program may receive a Student Leadership Development Transcript. This transcript provides certification of citizenship experiences, service, and module attendance.

Most of the students involved in the leadership program are undergraduate upperclassmen, although an increase in freshman and graduate student participation is anticipated. A broad range of academic majors is reported by participants. A high percentage of students are business, speech communication, or mass communications majors. Other reported majors include nursing, psychology, engineering, education, and political science.

RESULTS

A multifaceted approach has been developed to measure program effectiveness and individual growth. Feedback from students, presenters and facilitators on module evaluation forms has been very positive. More than 85 percent of the 283 student evaluations in Spring '89 reflected an overall module rating of either 4 or 5 on a 5-point Likert scale (5 = highly satisfactory, 1 = highly unsatisfactory). More than 80 percent of the respondents reported that the content met their expectations for leadership training.

Students have assessed their experiences in citizenship and service components through short-answer responses on documentation forms. Respondents have been quite positive in their reports of learning and growth through these activities.

Perhaps the best measure of program quality is evidenced in

responses to exit interview questions administered to 20 students who completed the program in June 1989. Eighty percent reported that the program had met or exceeded their expectations. Students also reported making valuable contacts through the program (75 percent), and experiencing increased awareness and involvement in community activities (95 percent). All respondents stated that they believed the program helped to prepare them for employment or made them more marketable.

The Student Leadership Development Program is currently developing an evaluation instrument that will measure individual growth as a result of participation in the program. A questionnaire is being prepared that will measure change in social values. The questionnaire will be administered before entrance into the program and upon completion of the program. The results will be measured against a control group.

CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

Assessment of the leadership program to date indicates that it has been successful in providing students with valuable growth experiences. Module evaluations and responses to exit interview questions have been exceedingly positive. However, additional assessment needs to be done. Based upon its success, the program staff is also pursuing additional resources. These resources will be used to increase staffing (in order to maintain the quality of service to students) and effectively respond to state legislation on volunteerism that will alter the structure of the program.

The Student Leadership Development Program could be modified to fit the needs of other institutions. However, development of such a program would require commitment and support from the institution's highest levels and cooperation that extends beyond the institution to the surrounding community.